

Message Text

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10
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7498
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, PGOV, PFOB, IS, JO
SUBJ: WEST BANK REACTION TO PROPOSALS FOR INCREASED AUTONOMY

REF: A. TEL AVIV 6710; B. AMMAN 7279

1. SUMMARY. INITIAL WEST BANK REACTION TO RENEWED TALK OF ISRAELI PLANS FOR GRANTING INCREASED AUTONOMY TO WEST BANK IN CERTAIN FIELDS OF ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN GENERALLY NEGATIVE. PUBLIC COMMENT SO FAR ECHOS VIEWS EXPRESSED IN PAST THAT QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS NOT LIKELY TO BE WILLING TO SERVE AS "PUPPETS" UNDER MILITARY OCCUPATION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RARE DISPLAY OF UNANIMITY, THREE LOCAL ARABIC DAILIES (AL QUDS, AL SHAAB, AL FAJR) HAVE IN PAST FEW DAYS ALL CRITICIZED PERES/ALLON PROPOSALS FOR WEST BANK LOCAL AUTONOMY AS OLD IDEAS WHICH ARE NO MORE ACCEPTABLE TO WEST BANKERS NOW THAN PREVIOUSLY. OTHER COMMENTS, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, GENERALLY SUPPORT THIS POSITION. STATEMENT OF NABLUS MAYOR

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HAI MAZOUZ AL-MASRI REJECTING PLAN HAS BEEN REPORTED IN AMMAN

REFTEL. MAYOR FARAH AL-ARAJ OF BEIT JALA, WHO TELLS US PERES RELEASED "TRIAL BALLOON" DURING VISIT TO TOWN WITHOUT ANY PRIOR DISCUSSION OR INCIATION TO MAYOR, HAS SIMILARYL CRITICIZED CONCEPT OF SELF-RULE UNDER MILITARY OCCUPATION. OUR SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT OTHERS CLEARLY SHARE HIS VIEW THAT NO SELF-RESPECTING WEST BANK LEADER WOULD ACCEPT POSITION IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER ISRAELI TERMS. ARAJ EXPRESSED VIEW THAT GENUINE AUTONOMY REQUIRES POLITICAL BASE AND NOTED THIS LACKING SINCE NO POLITICAL PARTIES PERMITTED IN WEST BANK. HE ALSO BELIEVES CONSENT OF ALL PALESTINIANS, INCLUDING PLO AND THOSE OUTSIDE WEST BANK, NEEDED IF WEST BANKERS TO COOPERATE IN PLAN.

3. NUMBER OF OTHER MAYORS AND LOCAL LEADERS, FROM NABLUS, TULKARM, JENIN AND RAMALLAH HAVE EXPRESSED NEGATIVE VIEWS IN SIMILAR VEIN, BOTH TO PRESS AND IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS.

4. COMMENT. ALL WEST BANK REACTION SO FAR WOULD INDICATE THAT ISRAELIS WILL HAVE NO GREATER SUCCESS IN "SELLING" THEIR LOCAL AUTONOMY IDEAS TO ARABS THAN THEY HAVE HAD IN PAST. EXPERIENCED OBSERVERS HERE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT ISRAELI EFFORT AT THIS TIME IS SOMETHING OF DESPERATION MOVE STEMMING FROM SURPRISE OF RABAT DECISION ON PLO AND REALIZATION THAT IT WAS MISTAKE NOT TO HAVE OFFERED MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS TO HUSSEIN. SINCE HUSSEIN CURRENTLY OUT OF PICTURE AND PLO UNACCEPTABLE TO ISRAELIS, THEY ARE NOW ATTEMPTING DEVELOP LOCAL LEADERSHIP. MOST BELIEVE THIS MOVE IS TOO LATE, A VIEW WE ARE INCLINED TO SHARE, AND WE HAVE SEEN NO INDICATION THAT WEST BANKERS, BECAUSE OF PRESENT "STALEMATE," ARE MORE INCLINED NOW THAN IN PAST TO COOPERATE IN ISRAELI PLAN.

5. INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US ALSO INDICATES THAT GOI HAS TAKEN NO NEW STEPS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM. OBSERVERS GENERALLY AGREE THAT NO WEST BANKER OF ANY STANDING LIKELY TO ACCEPT POSITION IN ISRALI-SPONSORED ADMINISTRATION, BOTH FOR REASONS OF PRINCIPLE AND, AT LEAST IN SOME CASES, FOR FEAR OF RETALIATION AS RESULT OF "COLLABORATION" WITH OCCUPIERS.

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